

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend paragraph [0010] as follows:

According to the technique disclosed in the No. HEI-6-234393 laid-open publication, it is necessary to empirically acquire, through trial and error, appropriate processing that can effectively prevent undesired sink marks from being produced in the reinforcing ribs requiring a relatively great thickness. Acquiring such appropriate processing ~~would~~ requires a significant amount of skill and experience, and therefore commercialization of the resin-made cover would require a great amount of time and labor. Further, where the ribs of the resin-made cover members form partition walls of the engine space in conjunction with other components that are to be joined with the covers, the presence of a joining web (denoted by reference numeral 148 in the publication) would create a particular need to allow for a drafting (pulling) direction of a molding die relative to the molding. In addition, the depth of a channel (denoted by reference numeral 188 in the publication), formed along an edge of the cover member, can not be so great in view of a draft angle of the ribs. Consequently, designing freedom or flexibility tends to be considerably limited.

Please amend paragraph [0015] as follows:

According to an aspect of the present invention, there is provided a cover joining structure in an outboard engine unit of a type which ~~includes: an~~ includes an engine; a propeller drivable by the engine; a drive shaft for transmitting a driving force from the engine to the propeller; a casing assembly supporting thereon the engine and rotatably supporting and accommodating therein the drive shaft, the outboard engine unit being attached via the casing assembly to a body of a boat for tilting and steering movement; and a covering assembly defining at least part of an engine space for accommodating therein the engine, the covering assembly including separate left and right cover members. The cover joining structure of the invention ~~comprises: fixedly~~ comprises fixedly joining sections provided on respective ones of opposed joining edges of the left and right cover members, the opposed joining edges of the left and right cover members being abutted against each other with the fixedly joining sections of the left and right cover members overlapped in face-to-face relation with each other in a front-and-rear direction of the outboard engine unit; and a fastener for fastening together the overlapped fixedly joining sections in the front-and-rear direction, to thereby join together the left and right cover members.

Please amend paragraph [0019] as follows:

With the arrangement that the fixedly joining sections of the left and right cover members are overlapped with each other in the front-and-rear direction along the slanted surfaces, the overlapped fixedly joining sections can be laterally brought closer to full overlap (i.e., into a greater degree of overlap) therebetween and pressed against each other more tightly, through "wedge-like" action, as the ~~faster~~ fastener is tightened. This arrangement permits a secure and reliable joint between the overlapped fixedly joining sections and hence the left and right cover members. Further, with the elongated hole formed in one of the overlapped fixedly joining sections, the overlapped fixedly joining sections can smoothly slide, along the slanted surfaces, relative to each other into a greater degree of overlap, with a simple construction. Thus, smooth and reliable fastening action can be accomplished.

Please amend paragraph [0020] as follows:

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided another improved cover joining structure of the outboard engine unit of the above-mentioned type. The cover joining structure of the invention ~~comprises:~~ frame comprises frame members integrally secured to respective

inner side surfaces of resin-made outer wall sections of the left and right cover members; and fixedly joining sections, provided on the respective frame members of the left and right cover members, for joining together the outer wall sections of the left and right cover members.

Please amend paragraph [0060] as follows:

The engine 2 is a vertical-type engine having a crankshaft 2a elongated vertically. The engine 2 includes a plurality of cylinders 2b, which are provided in such vertical alignment that their respective horizontal center lines 2L (only one of which is shown in Fig. 2) all lie in a substantial middle portion between left and right inner side surfaces of the outboard engine unit and which extend generally in the front-and-rear direction of the outboard engine unit 1. Each of the cylinders 2b has a horizontal piston ~~2b~~ 2c fitted therein, and a cylinder block 2d is formed by intermediate portions, in the front-and-rear direction, of the cylinders 2b.

Please amend paragraph [0061] as follows:

The engine 2 also includes a cylinder head 2e positioned rearwardly of the cylinder block 2d, a cylinder head cover 2f attached to the rear surface of the cylinder

head 2f 2e, and a crankcase 2g positioned forwardly of the cylinder block 2d. Each of the cylinders 2b forms a combustion chamber 2ch together with the corresponding piston 2c and cylinder head 2e.

Please amend paragraph [0062] as follows:

As clearly seen from Fig. 2, the engine 2 is a so-called "double overhead camshaft engine" with left and right air intake valves and driving cam shafts therefor mounted on the cylinder head, and a ~~spark~~ing spark plug 2k is disposed substantially centrally in each of the combustion chambers 2ch. Specifically, the ~~spark~~ing spark plug 2k is mounted in a fastening threaded hole (not shown) formed generally on the horizontal center line 2L, and, normally, attachment/detachment, to/from the above-mentioned fastening threaded hole, of the ~~spark~~ing spark plug 2k is performed, generally along the front-and-rear direction, in a substantial middle region of the corresponding combustion chamber 2ch between the left and right inner side surfaces of the chamber 2ch.

Please amend paragraph [0069] as follows:

The extension case 13, typically formed of an aluminum alloy, extends downward from the oil case 5 fixedly

joined to the underside of the oil case 5. Gearcase 14 is provided under the extension case 13, and the gearcase 14 accommodates therein a lower portion of the above-mentioned drive shaft 7, transmission/speed changing mechanism 8 and output shaft 9a.

Please amend paragraph [0087] as follows:

In the above-described manner, the engine space 12 are is partitioned by the peripheral flange 4e of the mount case 4 and some of the reinforcing frame members secured to the inner surface of the undercover members 21 and 41 engaging with the flange 4e.

Please amend paragraph [0127] as follows:

When the left and right undercover members 21 and 41 are in a joined-together state as shown in the figure, the above-mentioned recesses 21n and 41n formed in the cover members 21 and 41 together form the rectangular maintenance access opening 80 elongated in the left-and-right (widthwise) direction of the outboard engine unit 1. When the opening 80 is open as shown, any necessary tools can be inserted through the opening 80 into a lower rear interior of the engine space 12 defined by the undercover 20, to perform desired maintenance operations, such as repair, cleaning or replacement of any of the ~~spark~~spark plugs or plug caps.

Please amend paragraph [0166] as follows:

The maintenance access opening 80' is formed, in an upper rear end of the undercover 20, to permit access to any of the ~~a-sparking~~ spark plugs positioned centrally in the individual combustion chambers. The three jointed sections A, B and C are ~~provided,~~ provided on the rear vertical edges 41e and 21e, in vertically spaced-apart relation to each other. The lid 81A made of rubber or synthetic resin has a plurality of protrusions 152 provided on the inner surface thereof, and the lid 81A closes the maintenance access opening 80' with the protrusions 152 fitted in the mounting holes 150.

Please amend paragraph [0168] as follows:

In each of the above-described ~~embedment~~ embodiments, each of the fixedly joining sections is provided on a portion of the corresponding frame member which is located within the engine space as viewed from above (in a top plan view) and located above the horizontal connection between, i.e., the mutually-joined surfaces of, the upper cover and the undercover as viewed sideways (in a side view). Thus, the bolt can be easily and reliably inserted to fasten together the fixedly joining sections on the opposed frame members. Also, the thus fastened-together joining sections can be effectively concealed by the mutually-joined surfaces

of the upper and undercovers, with no noticeable projection and/or depressed surface, associated with the bolting, exposed on the outer wall sections of the cover members. As a result, the present invention can not only accomplish a superior outer appearance, but also ~~faeilitate~~ facilitates the joining operation because the fixedly joining sections are located above the mutually-joined surfaces of the upper and undercovers.